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SUBJECT: Paktika - Governor Katawazay Addresses Security,
Development and Tribal Dispute in Gayan District

Summary

1. (SBU) On May 17, PRT Paktika (Sharana) facilitated a visit by Governor Katawazay, National Directorate for Security provincial commander General Mohammad Yaseen, and the governor's tribal affairs advisor (and cousin) Mohammad Mateen to Gayan district in northeastern Paktika, on the border with Pakistan's unstable North Waziristan tribal agency, to meet with the district's tribal shura. Although security considerations prevented advance notice of the event, almost two hundred people from the district's majority Zadran tribe (the tribal base of the Haqqani network insurgency) assembled in the district center compound. The governor spoke with the people about security and development and said he would invite to the provincial capital leaders of Gayan's Zadran tribe and its minority Waziri population to resolve differences that are impeding extension of governance to the district's Waziris, who reside in the area of the strategically important Lwara border crossing area.

Support to GIROA, but Accommodation with Taliban

2. (SBU) Governor Katawazay urged the Zadran tribal leaders to support the GIROA and help stabilize their region, explaining that better security will lead to more development projects for the district. Governor Katawazay said he would do his best to increase the number of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the district and secure more support from the provincial government. The shura members and other participants responded that the leaders and people fully support GIROA. Several claimed, however, that the Taliban present in the district "do not bother us, so we do not bother them." Although the school near the district center was burned down in 2007 and students are now studying under open-air tin-roof shelters next to the district center, the people maintained that the Taliban do not interfere with madrassas operating in the district.

Health Care and Governance Concerns

3. (SBU) One leader complained that the lack of health services in Gayan district sometimes leads to deaths of patients en route to hospitals in surrounding areas (neighboring Orgun district or Miram Shah, in Pakistan). Others complained about the district sub-governor, Saber Gul, saying he spends more time at home than in the district center. Many participants presented impromptu written petitions to the governor, a number of which he addressed on the spot with cash payments. Attending the shura was the head of a household to which U.S. forces had made condolence payments in September after a civilian casualty incident killed several family members; he spoke cordially with provincial officials and PRT members.

Governor takes Initiative in Resolving Tribal Dispute

¶4. (SBU) During a lunch after the shura, Governor Katawazay encouraged the Zadran leaders to resolve the dispute between their tribe and the minority Waziri tribe in Gayan district. The Zadran elders energetically denied that the Waziris belong to Gayan district, saying they belong to neighboring Bermel district, where nearly all Paktika's Waziris reside. They insisted that the Waziris differ fundamentally from the Zadran in language, custom, and culture and cannot be trusted because they are more Pakistani than Afghan. Unable to convince the Zadran to cooperate with the Waziris, Governor Katawazay said he would invite ten leaders of both tribes to the provincial capital Sharana to resolve the dispute.

Comment

¶5. (SBU) Gayan district, located in northeastern Paktika and bordering Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal agency, is difficult for PRT to reach and, because of remoteness and security challenges, benefits from few development projects. The large majority of Gayan residents belong to the Zadran tribe, which dominates the mountainous area where Paktya, Paktika, and Khost provinces join and is the home base of the Haqqani network insurgency. The small Waziri population in Gayan who reside in southeastern Gayan adjacent to Bermel complain that the Zadran refuse to allow them to participate in the district shura or receive government services, such as identification documents, in Gayan. This situation effectively blocks the extension of governance to the strategically significant area near the Lwara border crossing point and Forward Operating Base Tillman. None of the nine tribal leaders currently in the Gayan shura is Waziri. Governor Katawazay's suggestion to bring both groups together to resolve their differences is a

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positive step that the PRT intends to support.

¶6. (U) Maneuver unit commander for east Paktika and Brigade Commander have seen this cable.

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